

The Honorable Curtis Collier  
United States District Court for the  
Eastern District of Tennessee  
900 Georgia Avenue, Room 253  
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402

September 22, 2018

Dear Judge Collier,

My name is Robert Lake and I am the Senior Vice President of Acquisitions at Randall-Reilly, a national media and data company based in Tuscaloosa. I have enjoyed 30 years at our company and I understand what it takes to earn respect and distinction in business and the community, all while raising a great family. I sit on numerous boards representing nonprofit organizations and banks, both local and national. Over my 50 years on this earth I have met many fine people across this country and I have never had the urge to write a letter such as this to a judge. I am a straight line right or wrong guy and that is exactly why I am writing this letter about Mark Hazelwood. I hope my letter will provide a viewpoint of Mark that was not presented in the trial proceedings and explain why I am asking for your honor to consider maximum leniency for Mark and his family.

Mark has been a friend of mine over 27 years and has achieved success despite the obstacles he faced. Mark is a great example of someone that not only achieved the American Dream but also created wealth and opportunity for thousands of people through his tenacity and drive. Mark started work in the truck stop industry by washing dishes at a truck stop, a very humble beginning. Mark also had no formal education after high school, as others which achieved his stature in life sometimes lean on to get them to the ivory tower. In short Mark is a very good business man that was instrumental in growing an east Tennessee gas retailer into the largest operator of travel centers in the US. Mark could have used his humble beginnings as an excuse, as many do today, yet Mark proved that in this country anyone can achieve anything if they work hard enough.

How can Mark's worth be measured in our industry? In rural areas good jobs are not that easy to come by. When a travel center is opened in a rural area there are literally a hundred jobs created that support families in that local community. By being an integral part of building the largest operator of travel centers in the country Mark's efforts created jobs for families across the nation. Now no one person is 100% responsible for a company's success but I can say that Mark was one of the driving forces behind that success story. People all over the country owe Mark a debt of gratitude for his business success because of the thousands of jobs created that gave individuals the opportunity to provide for themselves and their families.

Mark's business success is balanced by his family commitments. Mark is a good father to his children and a good husband to his wife Joanne. They depend on his support and guidance in their daily lives. This trial has really taken a physical and mental toll on Mark and his family. The stress of the long investigation and trial process effects everyone, as you know so well.


My dad always told me if you want to have a good understanding of what someone's future will hold, just take a look at their past. Well Mark's past demonstrates that he has been a fine citizen all his life. Mark has a past which I hope you will agree deserves leniency.



By being convicted Mark and his family already accept the public embarrassment of such a verdict. What does society gain by putting a man, that has been an exemplary citizen his entire life, behind bars? Your honor I ask for the good of Mark's family that you please consider leniency in your sentencing and consider that Mark be permitted to remain free on bond during his appeal process.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'ATRM' or similar, written in a cursive style.